



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS
FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
<http://lachildrenscommission.org>**

Monday, November 16, 2015

10:00 AM

AUDIO FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (15-5063)

Attachments: [AUDIO](#)

Present: Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Ann E. Franzen, Commissioner Wendy Garen, Commissioner Liz Seipel, Commissioner Janet Teague, Vice Chair Jacquelyn McCroskey and Vice Chair Wendy B. Smith

Absent: Commissioner Genevra Berger, Commissioner Maria Brenes, Commissioner Candace Cooper, Commissioner Sydney Kamlager, Commissioner John Kim, Commissioner Adrienne Konigar-Macklin and Chair Sunny Kang

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Call to Order. (15-5061)

Vice Chair McCroskey called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m., noting a lack of quorum. Commissioners Biondi and Garen joined after the meeting was called to order, establishing a quorum of members in attendance.

2. Introductions of the November 16, 2015 meeting attendees. (15-5062)

Self-Introductions were made.

3. Approval of the minutes from the meeting of November 2, 2015. (15-5064)

Due to lack of a quorum, no action was taken, this item was continued to the next meeting.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

II. REPORTS

4. Chair's Report and Discussion/Approval of the following items:

Cancellation of the December 21, 2015 regular meeting; and
Rescheduling of the February 1, 2016 meeting to February 8, 2016. (15-5065)

On motion of Commissioner Biondi, seconded by Commissioner Teague (Commissioners Kang, Berger, Cooper, Kim, Konigar-Macklin, Brenes and Kamlager being absent), the December 21, 2015 regular meeting was canceled.

On motion of Commissioner Garen, seconded by Commissioner Curry (Commissioners Kang, Berger, Cooper, Kim, Konigar-Macklin, Brenes and Kamlager being absent), the meeting of February 1, 2016 was rescheduled to February 8, 2016.

5. Department of Children and Family Services Director's Report by Philip L. Browning, Director. (15-5066)

Director Philip L. Browning reported on the following:

- **DCFS continues to recruit and hire new social workers, a total of approximately 1,200 social workers have been hired with a retention rate of 89% and about 1000 new positions have been added; however, the volume of caseloads is still high, the goal is to maintain 22 cases per social worker, it is currently 24 cases per social worker;**
- **As an effort to showcase the importance and implement the recommendations of the Katie A. lawsuit, offices in the areas of Compton and San Fernando Valley, also known as the immersion offices, plan on decreasing the cases per social worker to a lower number;**
- **As a result of a recent lawsuit, State vs. County, a board letter has been placed on the November 17, 2015 Board Agenda, if approved it will allow the County to contract with private agencies and move children out of the Children and Youth Welcome Centers and place them with private and non-profit agencies;**
- **Difficulties with securing placements for children who have challenges is still high; however, a recruitment plan is in process;**
- **DCFS continues to work with Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) population;**

- The Chief Executive Office (CEO) has encouraged DCFS to monitor and publish metrics for program performance indicators; and
- Tools such as the Foster Youth Satisfaction Survey and surveys for staff will be used to improve operations.

Vice Chair McCroskey requested DCFS to conduct a session on their enhanced training for new social workers. In response to questions posed by the Commission, Philip L. Browning responded as follows:

- 300 youth participated in the Foster Youth Satisfaction Survey; and
- Confirmed that 93% of the youth did not understand why they were taking prescription medication; follow up will be conducted.

III. PRESENTATION

6. Panel Presentation on LA County Homeless Initiative and Homelessness among Families with Children and Transitional Age Youth (TAY):

LA County Homeless Initiative
Phil Ansell, Director

Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
Chris Callandrillo, Director of Programs

Department of Children and Family Services
Naftali Sampson, Transitional Housing Programs
Edward Fithyan, Homeless Families Coming Together Pilot
Gail Winston, Homeless Families Coming Home Together Pilot (15-5359)

Phil Ansell, Director of Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative (HI), reported the following:

- Los Angeles and its counterparts, Glendale, Long Beach, and Pasadena conducted a bi-annual homeless count. In 2015, the total homeless population is 44,359, an increase of 12% from 2013;
- As of January 2015, 70% of the homeless in Los Angeles County (LAC) are unsheltered, distinguishing Los Angeles from other metropolitan areas in the United States. Additionally, LAC had an 85% increase in 2015 in tents, makeshift shelters and vehicles;

- **CalWORKS homeless families include families that are couch surfing, temporarily staying with friends or families, or without a fixed night time residence. This population increased 187% from July 2006 to May 2015. Almost all homeless families are receiving CalWORKS, unless all family members are undocumented;**
- **On August 17, 2015, the Board of Supervisors (Board) and Chief Executive Office (CEO) launched the County Homeless Initiative, with Mr. Ansell as the lead. The goal is to provide the Board a comprehensive set of recommendations on County strategies to combat homelessness and identify a subset of strategies that could be adopted by other counties and cities as well; and**
- **HI has been leading an inclusive planning process that began on October 1, 2015 with the participation of 24 county departments, 26 cities, and over 80 community organizations. All 88 cities in LAC have been invited to participate. The planning timeline is noted on the supporting document below.**
 - **October 1, 2015 - HI launched an initial policy summit on nine key topics associated with homelessness. HI prepared detailed policy briefs to lay out major issues and identify the LAC, LA City and other local efforts that are currently in place related to that topic. After each summit, HI identifies a set of potential recommended strategies. Second round of policy summits are to drill down details of the recommended strategies;**
 - **December 2015 - HI will go internally within County departments and consult with Department Heads and Board Deputies to finalize the set of recommended strategies to the Board;**
 - **January 2016 - The draft recommended strategies will be posted for public comment; and**
 - **February 2016- Recommended strategies will be presented to the Board.**
- **The City of Los Angeles is engaged in a parallel process, centered around the LA City Council Committee on Homelessness and has been an active participant in the policy planning process. The goal is for the City and the County to have coordinated complimentary sets of recommendations that would be considered at the same time frame by the Board and LA City Council; and**

- The key principle of the HI is to mainstream systems in the Department of Public and Social Services (DPSS), Department of Mental Health (DMH), Department of Health Services (HS), Department of Public Health (PH), and Probation (PB) and address issues effectively.

Mr. Ansell discussed some of the contributing factors to homelessness and stated that there is a severe shortage of affordable housing; rent for affordable housing has been driven up through a supply and demand dynamic; and those families that are working are earning poverty wages.

Gail Winstin, DCFS, discussed the current efforts that DCFS is implementing to address the homelessness issue and introduced the following programs—

Homeless Families Coming Home Together (HFCHT) Pilot:

- If children are on CalWORKS and detained from their families, they will lose their CalWORKS and subsequently become homeless. Many of these families have complied and substantiated in full with court orders, but cannot have their children returned because they have subsequently become homeless;
- HFCHT was piloted by DCFS and is funded by First 5 Commission; the pilot is currently focused on 25 families;
- Criteria for the pilot is that the child must be 0-5 years old; the family must be in full or substantial compliance with court orders; and homelessness is the sole barrier for children to return home to their families; and
- DCFS collaborated with 211, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), Los Angeles Dependency Lawyer (LADL), First 5 Commission, CDC, and Juvenile Dependency Court, to come together as a Committee and started discussing ways they can help these families. The Committee created a system which the LADL attorneys or the Children Social Worker (CSW) would contact DCFS through a referral form developed by DCFS.

Ms. Winstin further discussed the referral process and explained the involvement of 211 in the pilot program. Furthermore, the pilot has housed 13 families and 43 children out of the 25 selected for the pilot program thus far; remaining families are still going through the process.

Skid Row Program:

- The program was formed based on Supervisor Gloria Molina's zero tolerance for children in skid row;
- DCFS has staff located in skid row;
- DCFS, DPSS, DMH, and DPH work closely with Union Rescue Mission (Union) and the Midnight Mission. Ms. Winstin provided further details of mission entries and assessments protocol;
- DCFS also works closely with Volunteers of America. The Union's policy is to drug test upon entry. If the family is willing to work with the Union and abide by its rules, the Union and DCFS will assist in expediting housing for the family; and
- Staff roves skid row every morning and afternoon and is instructed to call the hotline for any abnormal activities.

Naftali Sampson, DCFS, reported on transitional housing programs:

Youth that has exited foster care:

- With the implementation of AB12, there are foster youth at the age of 18-housing program have been created and contracted out for this specific population.

Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP)

- 16-17 year old youth that are still in foster care; and
- Agencies are licensed through Community Care Licensing (CCL). The youth have the opportunity to receive supportive services based on their Transition Independent Living Plan. They will receive a monthly stipend from the contracted agency. The agency works with the youth to establish a budget to allow youth to purchase personal items such as food, hygiene products, cleaning, etc. This teaches the youth life skills that they will need when they exit foster care.

Transitional Housing Placement-Plus- Foster Care (THP+FC)

- **Non-Minor dependents ages 18-21 that are in foster care or exited foster care from DCFS or Probation are eligible;**
- **Agencies will have to get licensed through CCL then apply to contract solicitation that DCFS and Probation have issued;**
- **Supporting services are based on TILP- youth will receive monthly stipend from the agency. They will have to supplement that with their own income. This allows youth to purchase food and personal items on their own; and**
- **Most of the settings for THP + FC are scattered sites. Agencies are renting apartments in the community at large so youth are learning about independence and they are able to function in a community and learn what it means to be outside of a placement setting. These are not traditional foster care settings. It gives youth unique opportunity to learn how to be independent while still in foster care which means they maintain their CSW or deputy probation officer.**

Transitional Housing Program Plus (THP-Plus)

- **The program is State funded and intended for youth that have exited foster care after the age of 18 and do not receive stipends and are in supported housing;**
- **The program is for 24 cumulative months. Legislation just passed to allow youth to stay in the program for 36 months if they are in secondary education. DCFS is in the process of amending the contracts to allow the youth to stay in the program up to 36 months and up to the age of 25 under secondary education; and**
- **Most of these programs are in scattered site with youth living in apartments out in the community.**

Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA)

- **Housing is for youth that chose to exit foster care at the age of 18-21;**
- **Provides supervised transitional housing and supportive services;**

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- The focus is for the youth to learn self-sufficiency skills so that when they turn 21, they will be able to find other housing in a permanent setting; and
 - During this current contract cycle, LAHSA expanded the time for this program from two years of service to three years of service.

Partnership with DMH:

- DCFS provides funding to DMH. DMH, on behalf of LAHSA, contracts with three providers for youth who are 18-21 years old that exited foster care to provide supportive transitional housing for youth that have Axis I and/or Axis II Diagnosis. There are a total of 50 beds;
- This is a good program because this is a hard to place population; and
- The plan is to have these contracts put into the LAHSA contracts, but it will be providing the same DMH supportive services to this population.

Other Housing:

- In partnership with LAHSA, grants are transferred from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to LAHSA, and LAHSA through a solicitation process, issues those grants to the four providers who provide transitional housing to homeless youth; and
- DCFS maintains a list of housing on ILPOnline.org. The application is also listed on this website.

Chris Callandrillo, LAHSA presented the following:

Youth Coordinated Entry Pilot:

- This pilot is a coordinated entry system where a youth can walk into any door and state that they need housing and get assessed for the resources that are available. If they are eligible to return to foster care or if they are in foster care, it will increase their eligibility. They are assessed to find out what their needs are and fit those needs to other elements of eligibility. This helps refer youth to the right programs.

System Goals:

- Provides safety and support for youth in crisis; gets youth off the street as quickly as possible; and prevents homeless youth from becoming chronically homeless adults; and
- Connecting youth to the right services.

Matching Youth:

- Next Step Tool:
 - o A standardized assessment for Transitional Age Youth (TAY);
 - o Designed by 2 different researchers Ian Young from Org Code and Eric Rice from USC;
 - o The chart is intended to test the tool to see how well it targets the needs of individual youth to the housing resources that are available;
 - o The youth system is currently being piloted in Hollywood, started on Monday, November 9, 2015;
 - o Pilot was funded through the Tech Foundation;
 - o Opportunity for LAHSA to learn and look at how they want to bring things forward; and
 - o The plan has been communicated to the entire youth network and other areas of the County are invited to participate and to bring their ideas to what they are learning from the pilot and to incorporate their assessment tool over the next six months.

Homeless Family Solution System:

- Coordinated entry for families, February 2016 will be three years of the program's operation;
- LAHSA was the first area in the county that partnered with DPSS to bring funds into rapid re-housing for families in the country;
- Has a standardized assessment. Assess family for their individual needs and connects them to the resources that they need;

- Includes crisis housing: emergency shelter and transitional housing. It includes rapid re-housing and connects to other types of permanent housing (housing choice vouchers through the housing authority or permanent supportive housing); and
- Housed over 1,000 families last fiscal year June 2014-July 2015. In the last two years, there has been less than 8% recidivism.

Homeless Families Coming Together Pilot

- The First 5 LA funding will end next year in March. The Board has voted on some bridge money that goes to the end of June. The Homeless Family Solution System (HFSS) is at the table to see how we can take the lessons learned and processes that have been implemented to continue the good work in getting TFS families reunited with their children.

Mr. Ansell clarified that Mr. Callandrillo's discussion of the scheduled expiration of the First 5 LA funding is for the much larger and more ongoing subsidy program for families 0-5. Mr. Ansell also clarified HFSS is the first in the Country.

Mr. Callandrillo explained that the Board voted to add about \$2 million in homelessness prevention money for families. LAHSA is applying that prevention money to the HFSS. There is a HFSS Center in each of the eight SPAs. Families will have access to the prevention money through the HFSS Centers. It will be another month before the contracts are operational.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Mr. Callandrillo confirmed that the prevention funds can be used to pay for families' rent if they are at risk of eviction. The funds can also be used to assist families to return to where they came from. While the funding is not expected to last forever, this is LAHSA's opportunity to show what they can do. LAHSA is analyzing the use of funds and needs of families and reporting back to the Board. LAHSA put through a proposal to put it through the HFSS. Mr. Callandrillo indicated that this is just the beginning of it. As LAHSA goes through the contracting process, there will be performance targets. Mr. Callandrillo can bring back more information to the Commission.

Mr. Ansell added that the fund is a good bridge to HI recommendations; potential recommended strategy because as part of the supplemental changes at the end of September, the Board approved \$50 million in one-time funding to address the Homeless Initiative process then subsequently, the Board took action to allocate \$20 million out of the \$50 million, and \$2 million out of the \$20 million that Mr. Callandrillo had previously mentioned that's already been allocated by the Board. That leaves \$30 million left to be addressed for the HI recommendations. HI is actively looking for other funding; both County General Fund and more specialized funding can be used as countywide effort to combat homelessness.

Mr. Ansell reported on the following:

The subset of the potential recommended strategies:

- Being discussed in the 2nd policy summit in each area then ultimately it will be sent to the CEO to recommend to the Board.

Discharges into homelessness:

- Substantial amount of people become homeless when they exit an institution-county jail, hospital, prison, military, foster care system, or the juvenile delinquency system.
- Adopt discharge planning guidelines with the goal of avoiding discharges into homelessness upon release from an institution. The County currently does not have any guidelines on a system wide basis to essentially say it is not acceptable to discharge into homelessness.
- Bridge housing—temporary housing for people that only need temporary subsidized housing that is less likely to be applicable to youth exiting juvenile dependency or delinquency.
- Cross automated system—having to flag and identify people that are homeless.
- Reduce the number of TAY discharged into homelessness—look at opportunities to increase the number of youth eligible for extended foster care and/or those that are currently not taking advantage of it.
- Range of potential funding streams to address this issue because of the connections to the very large and important mainstream system.

Employment:

- Have a large subsidized employment program for CalWORKS families funded by 100% with State and Federal Revenue.
- Homeless families are eligible to participate in this program and there has been an effort there, but this is a potential strategy to modify that program specifically to meet the needs of homeless families. It'll be an enhanced version of the program for homeless families.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI):

- Set of potential strategy to increase the number of disabled individuals including parents who transition to SSI

Opportunity for Affordable Care Act:

- By and large effects single adults because that is the new population who is now eligible for Medi-Cal whereas families and former foster youth were eligible for Medi-Cal prior to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act.
 - o Implementation of the drug Medi-Cal waiver which for the first time when fully implemented should make Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment both residential and non-residential available on demand to all people covered under Medi-Cal who have a medical necessity for SUD treatment and are willing to engage on a voluntary basis.
 - o Utilizing the Homeless Services System essentially to connect homeless people to health care.

Outreach/Engagement:

- There are currently three coordinated entry systems in the County— Homeless Solutions System for families; coordinated homeless system for adults; coordinated entry system for transitional youth. There are a range of opportunities to strengthen the system HI.

Coordination of Current Services:

- The continuum of subsidized housing through the homeless services system.
- Start with emergency shelter, move to bridge housing which is very short term, subsidize housing, then rapid re-housing that is typically 6-12 months for someone who can reasonably be expected to pay their own rent. After that duration, through a secured employment or secured federal disability benefits such as SSI or Veterans benefits that can be utilized to pay rent, the system then move onto permanent rental subsidy that is typically federally funded through HUD then at the high end of the continuum permanent supportive housing.
- Rapid re-housing is an area that has not been substantially funded as an ideal target for local dollars. Local dollars are not well suited for long term permanent housing subsidies, but they are well suited for rapid re-housing.
- As part of the Board's action, where \$2 million was dedicated to LAHSA for homeless prevention; \$10 million was dedicated for rapid re-housing which is a major jumpstart in terms of the county investment in rapid re-housing. HI is also looking at opportunities for cities to contribute towards the cost of rapid re-housing through County administered rapid re-housing program for homeless individuals or families who live within their jurisdiction.

Homelessness Prevention:

- People are becoming homeless every day from either being discharged from an institution or for other reasons such as evictions. HI is exploring the idea of a regional homeless prevention program that combines case management, rent assistances, and legal services. If such a program moves forward, it would focus heavily but not exclusively, on families with children.

Subsidized Housing:

- One thing that all homeless people have in common is that they do not have enough money to pay the ongoing cost of rent or the cost of moving and sometimes in the case of single adults, they are making a choice to not be permanently housed.

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- To provide countywide homeless case management system.
 - Rapid re-housing specifically tied to the two key ways for people who are getting the rapid re-housing subsidy could move in or could remain in permanent housing paying their own rent through employment or federal disability benefits.
 - HI is looking for potential opportunities through mainstream systems to fund rapid re-housing.
 - To provide rapid re-housing for parents of children in out-of-home placements where the only barrier to reunification is the parents' homelessness.

HI spoke with Mr. Browning about the opportunity of DCFS funding these subsidies on a time limited basis for families where the only barrier to reunification is the parents' homelessness and where the family is eligible for CalWORKS and eligible to participate in welfare to work services through DPSS including subsidizing employment. The notion is that DCFS would take dollars that would otherwise be used to pay for the ongoing cost of out-of-home placement, instead, utilize funds towards time-limited rental subsidy up to 12 months per family. There will be an initial investment and the savings in out-of-home cost would be tracked over time and then those savings would be reinvested in a subsequent period to pay for the rental subsidy for additional families. Mr. Ansell stated that this appears to be an ideal opportunity for the county to take the funds to resolve homelessness.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Mr. Ansell confirmed that Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds for affordable housing are included; however the presentation is limited to focus on current efforts by DCFS and LAHSA wanted to focus on potential recommended strategy. Throughout the process, information was gathered from all the core County Departments involved in homelessness including DMH to compile an inventory of current efforts and draw on the inventories in the policy briefs for each of the summits so that various services available through MHSA has been detailed in the HI process.

Mr. Ansell also confirmed that a substantial number of homeless providers focus on TAY have been actively participating in various policy summits whether it is employment, discharge into homelessness, or subsidize housing. It has been well represented in the process; however, the opportunity in the back end, HI is not there yet.

The question is what policies will the Board adopt and what funding will be associated with various strategies and then there will be the question of implementation and question where will funding go and to the extent that funding may go to community providers, to existing contractors or could be expanded where there needs to be a competitive procurement. These are questions that will not be reached until Board action in February 2016. In February the Board will consider dozens of recommended strategies, but how the strategies will be implemented will be post February. Mr. Ansell anticipates having meetings for the implementation. HI intention is to build on the collaboration that has manifested throughout this process as they move to implementation. The specific structure of the implementation phase remains to be determined, but will certainly involve collaboration and will be inclusive subject to any propriety procurement.

In response to Vice Chair McCroskey's questions, Director Browning indicated that there are a number of things that are captured anytime there are assessments or investigations, but unsure about any specific data on homelessness in the extent of substandard or housing instability contribution to initial referrals and case opening. DCFS will get back to the Commission with the information. Mr. Ansell added that homelessness is not a basis for detention, but it is a basis for not reunifying.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

IV. MISCELLANEOUS

7. Announcements. (15-5068)

Vice Chair McCroskey announced that the retreat will be held on February 8, 2016.

8. Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (15-5070)

There were no matters presented.

9. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on item(s) of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (15-5071)

Member of the public, Booker Pearson addressed the Commission and indicated that he has worked with Mr. Browning, Commissioner Biondi and Judge Margaret Henry who was the Supervising Judge over the past two years, to get this moving; the pilot has been an incredibly highly successful model, with many partners and one that was not mentioned in the presentation was the CDC, who focused strictly on the pilot families. During the pilot, 7 children were reunited and their jurisdiction was terminated. Mr. Pearson encouraged support of this pilot, which has saved the County thousands of dollars.

10. Adjournment for the meeting of November 16, 2015. (15-5072)

The meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.m.